Message Text

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ORIGIN OES-04

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TO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, BR

SUBJECT: ENRICHED URANIUM FOR BRAZIL

REF: BRASILIA 7355

1. ANGRA II CONDITIONAL ENRICHMENT CONTRACT CALLS FOR INITIAL DELIVERY OF ENRICHED URANIUM ON JULY 1, 1980 AND ANGRA III CONTRACT ON JULY 1, 1981. PRESENT FIRM URENCO PLANS ARE TO HAVE A TWO MILLION SEPARATIVE WORK UNIT (SWU) CAPACITY IN OPERATION BY 1982, BUT ALL OF THIS CAPACITY IS PRESENTLY UNDER FIRM CONTRACT. URENCO HAS STATED THAT ADDITIONAL CAPACITY CAN BE ADDED WITH A FIVE-YEAR LEAD TIME AND THAT THEY PLAN TO HAVE A TEN MILLION SWU CAPACITY BY 1985. ON THE STRENGTH OF THE FIVE-YEAR LEAD TIME, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT URENCO IS A POTENTIAL SUPPLIER FOR ANGRA II AND III IF EXPANSION WERE BEGUN IMMEDIATELY; CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT URENCO IS HAVING

DIFFICULTY IN RAISING THE NECESSARY CAPITAL FOR FURTHER EXPANSION AT THIS TIME AND IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT THE SMALL INCREMENT OF CAPACITY INVOLVED WOULD JUSTIFY AN ACCELERATION OF CAPACITY EXPANSION EXCLUSIVELY FOR BRAZILIAN NEEDS.

- 2. ASSESSMENT OF USSR ENRICHMENT CAPABILITIES IS
 CONSIDERABLY MORE DIFFICULT. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE A FAIR
 IDEA OF USSR ENRICHMENT CAPACITY, WE HAVE LITTLE INFORMATION ON EXISTING COMMITMENTS (INCLUDING INTERNAL AND
 OTHER BLOC NEEDS) OR ON POSSIBLE EXPANSION PLANS. IT
 IS OUR EDUCATED GUESS, HOWEVER, THAT THE USSR COULD
 PROVIDE THE NEEDED ENRICHMENT SERVICES FOR ANGRA II AND
 III, AT LEAST FOR THE EARLY YEARS OF OPERATION UNTIL
 ALTERNATIVE SOURCES DEVELOPED. THIS ASSUMES THAT THE
 RELEVANT ENRICHMENT SERVICES CONTRACTS WERE ENTERED INTO
 IN THE NEAR FUTURE, OTHERWISE OTHER CUSTOMERS MAY TAKE
 IN THE INTERIM REMAINING UNCOMMITTED USSR CAPACITY.
- 3. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT ENRICHMENT CAPACITY FROM THE FRENCH-CONTROLLED EURODIF ENRICHMENT PLANT ALREADY IS UNDER CONTRACT. A POSSIBLE SECOND EURODIF PLANT IS BEING DISCUSSED BUT IT WOULD NOT BE ON-STREAM IN TIME TO MEET THE ANGRA II AND III SCHEDULED DELIVERIES.
- 4. ALTHOUGH THIS ANALYSIS WOULD APPEAR TO LEAVE THE USSR AS THE ONLY SERIOUS "COMPETITOR" TO THE U.S. FOR FUELING THE ANGRA II AND III REACTORS, IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT THE ENRICHMENT NEEDS FOR TWO REACTORS OF THIS SIZE ARE RELATIVELY SMALL AND THAT THERE PROBABLY WILL BE AT ANY GIVEN TIME SOME LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF ENRICHED URANIUM TO SUCH NATIONS AS THE FRG AND FRANCE ON A "SPOT" BASIS (IN CONTRAST TO LONG-TERM SUPPLY). IF THERE WERE AN ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL INCENTIVE TO MAKE SUCH MATERIAL AVAIL-ABLE TO BRAZIL, THEN IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO TIDE ANGRA II AND III OVER THE INITIAL PERIOD OF OPERATION UNTIL A LONG-TERM SUPPLY (INCLUDING THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INDIGEN-OUS CAPABILITY BASED ON THE NOZZLE PROCESS) COULD BE DEVELOPED. OF COURSE, AN ARRANGEMENT OF THIS NATURE WOULD NOT GIVE BRAZIL AT THIS TIME THE LONG-TERM ASSURANCE OF ADEQUATE ENRICHMENT SUPPLY WHICH IT PROBABLY DESIRES. ROBINSON CONFIDENTIAL

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